



Mr. Morgan

Fulbright Stirs The Capital

By EDWARD P. MORGAN
(From an ABC Broadcast)

Senator William Fulbright made a speech in the Senate two weeks ago that still has official Washington talking to itself.

The Arkansas Democrat, speaking as chairman of the powerful Foreign Relations Committee, in effect charged that President Johnson had been duped in fact, bamboozled into sending the Marines into the Dominican Republic last April to put down a rebellion which the United States should have supported.

Whether it was an act of moral courage — or public folly — for a Senator to say that Lyndon Johnson had been the victim of duplicity within his own official family remains to be seen.

But the Fulbright speech prompted the most vociferous bipartisan support for the President's Dominican intervention policy that Mr. Johnson has received at any time since the post-assassination days when he was taking over the White House command from the late John F. Kennedy.

Deliberately or not Senator Fulbright succeeded in making a lot of people angry. He escalated the ire of the State Department by charging that Ambassador W. Tapley Bennett not only missed a couple of good chances to forestall the Dominican uprising but also that Bennett made a panic call for the Marines when they were not really needed.

The Arkansas Senator also gored the sacred cows of the federal intelligence community. He implied that the CIA and FBI operatives in Dominica deliberately favored a corrupt military oligarchy to the self-appointed colonels of the unwashed insurgent movement.

So, he said, the United States authorities in Santo Domingo raised the false cry of "Communist takeover." But the statement that caused White House temperatures to pop the highest was Fulbright's declaration that the Marines were ordered to Santo Domingo "not to save American lives — but to prevent the victory of the revolutionary movement."

Pulled out of the text of the speech — as it is and was — the statement questions the motives of the White House. And in the understated patois of present-day Washington, that's an "imprudent" thing to do. Still there has been no public word from Mr. Johnson about how he feels about the allegations of his old friend, Bill Fulbright.

What the Senator evidently overlooked was that it was just as politically impossible for President Johnson to sit back and risk another Cuba-type takeover in the Dominican Republic as it would be — say, for the Oxford-educated Mr. Fulbright to go back to Arkansas and campaign for miscegenation.

Almost lost in the verbiage and political acrimony which still is simmering on Capitol Hill is Senator Fulbright's main point — that the United States is being forced into the impossible position of virtually opposing all reform movements in Latin America only because some native Communist might also approve the same reforms.

It was in March of last year that the Senator from Fayetteville made another unorthodox Senate speech on foreign policy. At that time, Fulbright urged a

fresh, new approach to American diplomacy saying that the country has been saddled with "old myths" and a false, self-righteousness toward the changing world. Americans tend to regard hostile philosophies, such as Communism, as some kind of "original sin", he said, to be effective in dealing with our enemies, United States leaders should "act wisely and creatively upon the new realities of our time..." and even think "unthinkable thoughts."

Among the "unthinkable thoughts" suggested was the possibility that "Communism might not be the monolithic bugaboo it pretends to be..." The Chinese Communists seem to be proving Fulbright's point.

Also it was suggested that "the United States might be able to trade with the Iron Curtain countries without selling her freedom-loving soul" American trade missions now are testing out this thesis.

And Senator Fulbright also suggested that Fidel Castor's Cuba is likely to be around the Caribbean for quite some time, it just won't sink into the sea and there's no point in getting hysterical about it.

All in all, last year's Fulbright address on "old myths and new realities" gained the Senators the reputation as the Senate's most forward looking philosopher of American foreign policy. By contrast, last week's speech has brought him more brick-bats than Kudos, and it will be interesting to see what happens if and when the record of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee investigation into the Dominican crisis is published.

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